



## Staying Grounded During Election Season Webinar

Discussion led by moderator Emily Klear, LMFT and panelists Leon Abbey, LCPC, Kalen Cobb, LSW, and Laura Kanaplue, LSW

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Biological responses play a role in why it can be challenging to remain grounded in an election season; our nervous system scans for safety or danger, which can lead to anxiety during political discussions.
  - Impulsive decision-making can arise from these automatic responses when feeling threatened.
- It's important to create safe spaces for open dialogue during stressful times, such as elections.
- Self-check-ins are crucial for understanding personal experiences related to the election cycle, including pre-existing stressors that may be exacerbated by current events.
- Common triggers during election seasons include financial pressures, health concerns, and relationship issues, which can become more pronounced due to political discourse.
- Grounding techniques and recognizing your emotional capacity for difficult conversations are both vital in managing stress; setting boundaries around political conversations is a healthy practice.
- Identifying internal reactions to election-related discussions can help you understand your emotional responses and what aspects you can control versus those you cannot.
- It can be helpful to channel anxious energy into constructive actions—like volunteering for campaigns aligned with your values—can help mitigate feelings of helplessness.
- Emerging adults often have access to diverse information sources that shape their views differently from previous generations, leading to potential conflicts in family discussions.
- It's okay to disengage from unproductive conversations about politics with family members when emotions run high or when past discussions have been contentious.
- Boundaries are intended to create a safe space for both individuals involved, rather than to punish or exile anyone.
  - Establishing boundaries can help protect oneself while also preserving the relationship with others.
- It's important to clarify the purpose of conversations—whether it's for education, sharing perspectives, or simply venting—to enhance safety during discussions.
  - Understanding motivations behind dialogues can facilitate boundary-setting conversations beyond immediate contexts, such as political discussions during election cycles.
- Preparing children for anxiety related to elections involves creating safe spaces and discussing how they feel about ongoing events.
  - Limiting children's access to constant media exposure is vital; however, it's equally important to discuss these limitations openly with them.
  - It's helpful to encourage discussions around personal values **before** delving into political candidates or beliefs, as it can help foster self-awareness in children.
- Acknowledgement vs. agreement:
  - There is a distinction between acknowledging differing perspectives and seeking agreement, which can lead to more constructive conversations.